



Turkey Day Underway

In case your detective skills are more akin to Clouseau than Holmes, the government-issued decoration above means that its that time of year again where we all gather around the table and thank our forefathers for not staking Squanto out to die. This time of year is traditionally reserved for reflection and expressing our gratitude to still be sucking wind, (and some of you are sucking in a little extra for that reflection in the mirror after today).

While you're hunkered around the family table sharing stories of Thanksgivings past, and cramming your third helping of grandma's

casserole into your mouth, some of us are lucky enough to be celebrating this holiday that commemorates the discovery of the New World thousands of miles away from it. Who needs to be surrounded by loved ones when you can be surrounded by a billion gallons of seawater anyway? People always ask me what we do on holidays underway, and no one wants to believe that we don't really throw banner parties and grand banquets in the belly of our bobbing tin can. I've never been accused of hoarding misery, and I'm not going to start now; so I give you...

A Very Halsey Thanksgiving (Dinner).

The Turkey



Thanksgiving is the only holiday with an almost universal menu that

everyone can agree upon; and onboard ships, everyone can agree that the food is universally plain. Thanksgiving is one of those times where the cooks go crazy and throw "plain" right out the window. Lets take a stroll down chow line lane shall we?

Turkey, the gobbler, is the single most identifiable part of a Thanksgiving dinner, displayed here in a careful jumble of skin, bones, and grease garnished with a touch of wilted greenery.

The Pig



Slide your tray down the line and we run into a rather appetizing bit of succulent sliced swine swimming in sweet sauces.

The other white meat is always ready to pinch hit for turkey in less conventional households, and Halsey is all about breaking conventions. Strangely, this ham looks a good sight better than the usual pressed variety or mystery meat passed off as ham we typically see. This is the point where I thought that I should probably be thankful that I wasn't part of the underway replenishment detail that was stuck on deck refueling the ship, and that I was getting to enjoy dinner before it dried out too much.

The Heavy Hitters



The next stop on the Chow Line Express is Starch Street. For me, this is the shady part of town, where a few bits of seasoning carefully disguise the freshly hydrated potatoes to look like the real thing. The cornbread stuffing might be wearing a smile, but

wearing a smile, but I'm afraid that the hand beneath its jacket is holding a switchblade. I took my scoop of mashed taters and a ladleful of turkey gravy and hopped back on the Chow Line Express before I had my wallet stolen by the yams.



The Greens



Before I joined the Navy, I couldn't have told you what a wax bean even looked like. I still couldn't tell you what they taste like since even the word 'lima' sounds tastier than 'wax'

so I always opt out on that count. Vegetables have never been a necessity for me at a Thanksgiving table, but I am partial to something like cooked broccoli or even fresh beets. But I'll shake my clenched fist in protest to wax beans until the day I die. If only I had inquired a little deeper into the mystery of the empty bin, I would have learned that it had once held the perfect Thanksgiving vegetable: corn. Sweet and golden I'm told it was, and a curse upon those lucky Sailors who got there before me. Squanto should've taught the pilgrims to grow enough for everyone.

The Ambrosia

I don't know the historical significance of cranberries at the Thanksgiving table, but as long as the horn of plenty spills them out onto my table every year I really don't care. Beautifully sweet and tart, they're like dessert before dessert and I've never been able to get enough of them. Do I care that five minutes earlier this sludge of processed fruit was one solid cylindrical mass molded perfectly to its can? No I do not, nor do I care that we have had



them twice already in the last week.

The Sweet Stuff



Before I could get the anticipated taste of cranberries out of my mouth I had arrived at the dessert station. Without so much as a glance at the dark slices of sweet potato pie, I channeled Eve and snatched at the forbidden fruit of apple pie, the unwanted child of the Thanksgiving dessert tray. Canned apple filling is always a safe bet anyway, there's no telling what made its way into that sweet potato pie.

The Refreshment



This is the part of the journey where a Sailor is forced to make a painful

decision. Door number one holds no surprises with a single spigot devoted to water and a tray of ice in place of the broken dispenser. A step further brings you to door number two: the mystery machine. Six spouts bearing infinite possibilities of what could come pouring out into your cup. Could it be apple, grape, or just a steady stream of hint-of-orange water? You'll never know until you push the button!

Wait a minute, what's this... the third door appears to have been disguised with festive accoutrements! Could it be that it contains something other than the repulsive milk designed to stay "fresh" after months on a warm shelf? I quickly saw through the clever ruse and opted for the only choice that wasn't a gamble, good old water.



The Extras

What Thanksgiving dinner would be complete without a sandwich comprised of honey and jelly? Or perhaps a fine broth of grease, with what appears to be some chicken and noodles floating in it. The health nuts on board should be happy to see that salad is still an option as always.



I hope that they haven't developed an aversion to Thousand Island or Blue Cheese dressing, because they're not like to find a drop of anything else this far from the Wardroom or the Chief's Mess.



The Refreshment

You know what would go great with this feast upon the high seas? A root beer float. But alas, our soda fountain was not in operation on this day of high celebration. That's not to say that we didn't have a problem with the whole 'float' part of that dream too since the soft serve machine hasn't gotten any use since the first couple weeks into deployment. Something about the wrong mix, but I smell conspiracy.



The Moment of Truth



Now, all that's left is to sit down with my lovingly prepared meal and enjoy a showing of Disney's, *Three Musketeers*, and polite conversation detailing how much beer everyone will be drinking tomorrow in Hong Kong. I don't think that it gets more authentic than this, folks.

The Verdict

If it would say anything that I ate everything, then I would say that. Aside from the turkey being a bit on the dry side, I didn't really have any complaints. The ham was decent, the potatoes were potatoey, and the cranberries and pie sweet to the tongue. All in all, I'd say that on a scale from 1 to 10, (with 1 being a fish meal and 10 being fajita day) I'd give this holiday spread a hearty 7 even with my impatience for waiting for more corn to be ready.

